

# CONSUMER ALERT



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**HOME IMPROVEMENT CHECKLIST**  
**What to do before you hire a contractor**

1. **Know what work you want to have completed.** Make a specific list, this will allow you to easily negotiate with various contractors
2. **Know what permits are needed.** Even though a qualified contractor should be aware of necessary permits and inspections, you should know them too. Check with your local building and codes office before beginning a project. Additionally, determine whether the contractor has the proper insurance.
3. **Shop around.** Meet with multiple contractors, get quoted prices for the work you want done and compare.
4. **Get references and check them.** Ask friends and neighbors which contractors they used for home improvement projects and whether or not they were satisfied with the results. Ask the contractor for references and speak to former customers.
5. **Get a Timeline.** Find out the proposed timeline for when each contractor can start and finish the project.
6. **Never pay the full price upfront.** Establish a payment schedule and stick to it. This may include an initial down payment and subsequent incremental payments until work is completed.
7. **Put it in writing.** The contractor should provide a written contract for home improvement work. The contract should include a timeline for work to be completed, a payment schedule and as many specifics as possible about the project, such as types or brands of materials. Do not be induced into signing a contract by high-pressure sales tactics.